



CADCast Podcast Newsletter

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boblupo@yahoo.com

Skype: boblupo

AutoCAD SheetSets Podcast Summary

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In this second issue of the CADCast Podcast Newsletter, I finally complete the SheetSet series with the promised, but much belated SheetSet summary.

I'm finally finding a little bit of time here and there to wrap up loose ends. It has been in the back of my mind to get these promised tasks completed. I am very task oriented and it is very hard for me to let go of a task that I have not completed.

Now that this task is behind me, I hope that I can keep some interest from you, the subscribers so I can continue to produce new shows.

If anyone has some news that they would like to share, a service that they provide, or a product to promote, I'd be happy to hear from you regarding the possibility of recording an interview for the next episode.

Just one more update on statistics before moving on to the summary. I'm happy to say that subscriptions have continued to increase despite my apparent podfading. I have also received additional feedback from new and long time listeners, all of which is positive.

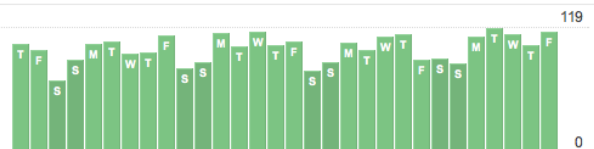
I would like to ask that if you do subscribe that you subscribe via iTunes. This will boost the usership in my category and gain more exposure for the podcast. This can only help benefit my subscribers since it will potentially allow me to seek sponsorship, which will in turn make this venture pay for itself, at least to reimburse time expended.

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Thursday, October 19 – Friday, November 17

♦ **99** subscribers (on average) **SUBSCRIBERS**

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Thursday, October 19 – Friday, November 17

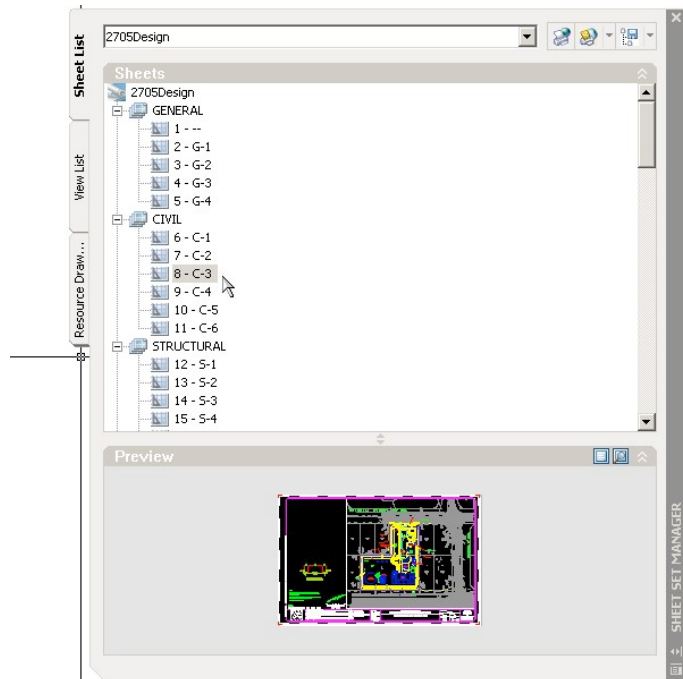
Using AutoCAD SheetSets

The SheetSet Manager was introduced in AutoCAD 2005 as a new way for AutoCAD users to manage their drawings. In addition to traditional file organization and naming conventions, the SheetSet Manager offers new ways to manage not only your drawings, but the data within your drawings and the production workflow.

When deciding whether to use a SheetSet to manage your drawings, consider not only how many drawings you have, but the life-cycle of the drawing set. You may also ask yourself several questions:

- Does the project have multiple deliverables?
- Are subcontractors involved that would work on portions of the drawing and submit them to you for publishing?
- Do you have repetitive data that is consistent between all of your drawings?

The answers to these and many more questions can demonstrate the need to better organize your drawings using SheetSets in AutoCAD. This guide will illustrate the typical practices to employ when using SheetSets.



Standard Organization

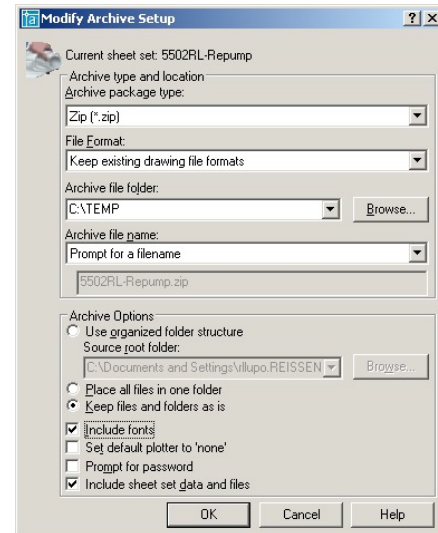
Ideally, you want to keep a separate drawing file for each sheet in a set. Although the SheetSet Manager can keep track of drawing sheets as multiple tabs in the same drawing file, there is at least one situation where this may be a problem, but this problem has a few workarounds. The situation is one where you may publish drawings to a PDF so anyone can open and print the drawings without the need for AutoCAD. The problem occurs during publishing time. If all of your sheets are on multiple Layout tabs in a common drawing, publishing to PDF will create a PDF file with the same name as your drawing. For each Layout tab, a new version of the same PDF will be created. In the end, you will have a single PDF containing only your last Layout tab in that drawing file. One workaround is to create a PDF printer configuration that will request a filename. This solves the file overwriting problem, but you will have to be present during the entire publishing process to supply the individual filenames. In a large drawing set, this can occupy too much of your time, defeating one of the features of a SheetSet and background publishing. Another workaround is to publish to DWF. This will create a single multi-page DWF that can then be published to PDF or keep as a DWF for others to view or print in addition to the PDF. This way the entire set can be published without user interaction. Use this latter option if having multiple DWG files is not your preferred method of working.

Backup and Archiving

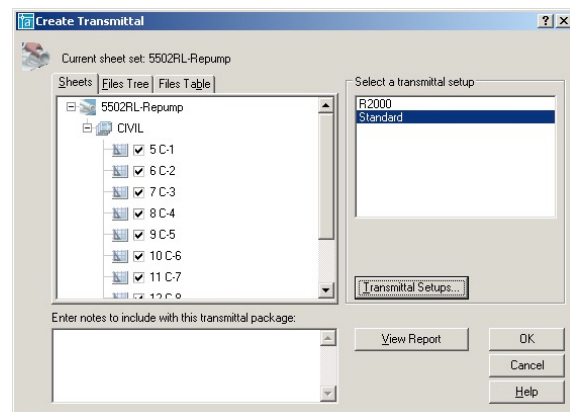
It is important to manage your drawing folders including establishing a backup and archiving standard. Using the SheetSet manager, you can more easily backup and/or archive your complete drawing set including all xREFs, styles, SheetSet files, images, and any other support files that your drawings require.

There are actually two ways to archive: Archive & eTransmit - so what's the difference?

Archive can only archive from the topmost level of the SheetSet Manager which includes the entire SheetSet. eTransmit allows archiving all the sheets just like Archive, but also allows for archiving only a portion of your SheetSet either by section or discipline, or by individual sheet. eTransmit also allows for the saving of multiple transmittal configurations in a slightly different dialog box than Archive. This can make it easy for repetitive archiving tasks or packaging drawings for transmittal.



For both Archive and eTransmit methods, you have control over the inclusion of files whether or not they are part of the sheetset. Both methods will include all files including images, fonts, plotter definitions, and all the other files needed to work on the drawing set or subset. Both methods also allow for the modification of the archive to convert to previous drawing formats, defining the folder structure, and many other options.



Creating a Simple SheetSet

To create a simple SheetSet, use the SheetSet creation wizard to get started. You can later use additional techniques to add more sheets as your drawing set develops. To begin using the SheetSet Creation Wizard, you must have at least an empty drawing open. In fact, in order to do any configuration or setting properties of your SheetSets, you must have at least an empty drawing open.

Follow along with the Wizard to get started. Included among the options in creating a sheetset is the ability to create custom properties. This will be covered later so continue along to get through the Wizard.

Use the "existing drawing" method to start a SheetSet if you already have drawings organized in a project folder. You can then create subgroups and drag and drop your sheets to reorganize your drawings.

You can initially focus on creating your starting SheetSet and worry about renumbering your sheets once your SheetSet is populated. The quick way to renumber your sheets in your set is to use Rename and Renumber. This will adjust the page numbering of your

sheets in your SheetSet, but will do little else unless you have AutoCAD 2006. Rename and Renumber does not rename the files unless you are using AutoCAD 2006. So what are the benefits of using sheet naming and numbering for organization if you are not using AutoCAD 2006? The benefits are realized when using AutoCAD fields.

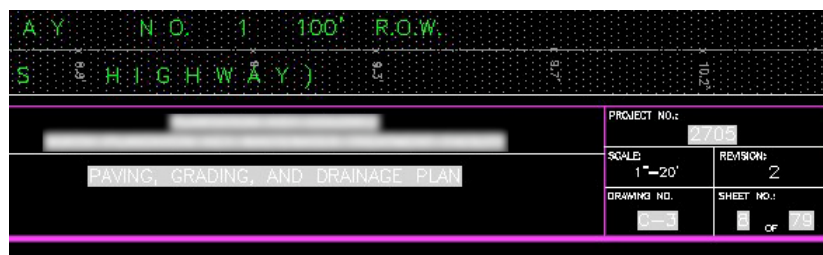
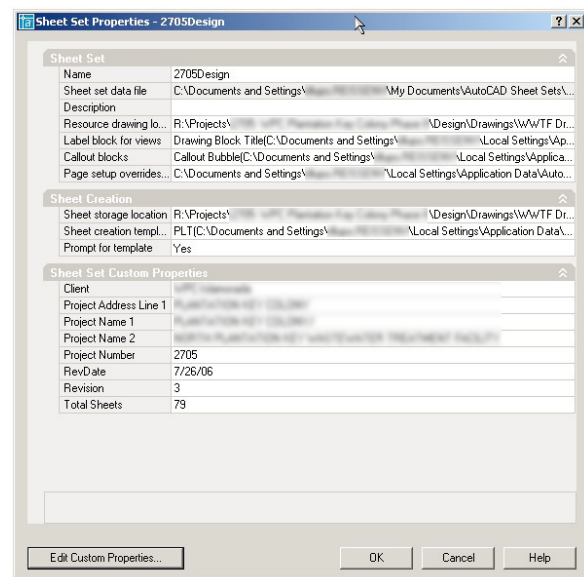
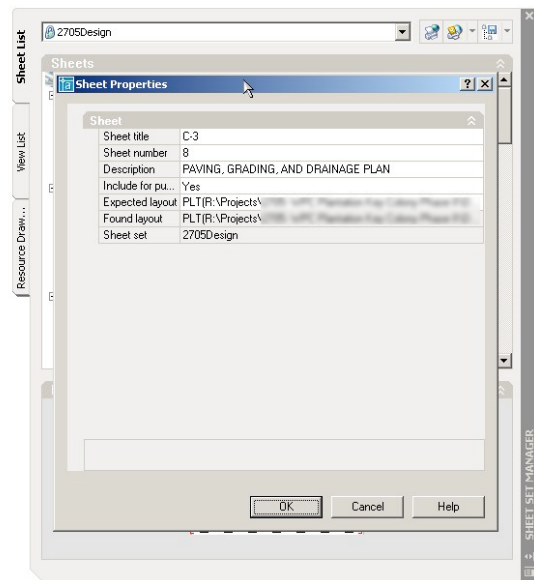
Using Fields

Using fields in your drawing blocks, specifically the title block, in conjunction with sheets can automate drawing publishing and management, as well as using Views to create dynamic detail referencing and linking. Before discussing fields, it is important to know where fields can get their values.

In the SheetSet Manager, right-click a sheet and select properties. You can then modify the sheet's title, page number, description, and any other custom properties you may have created. You can also right-click the sheetset and select properties. Here you can edit global property values that can be applied to all sheets in the set such as in drawing title blocks. These values are automatically populated into the title block attributes each time the drawing is regenerated.

By editing the attributes for the title block, these fields can be overridden manually by highlighting the field text and typing over it. To reassign a field to an attribute, right click the "Value" field and select "Insert field". This will display the field dialog box where all autocad fields are available for insert. Find the SheetSet field category, then select the appropriate field name for sheet-specific fields such as titles and page numbers.

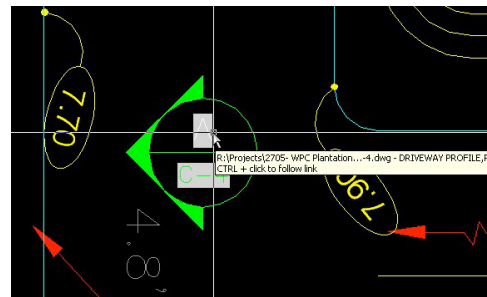
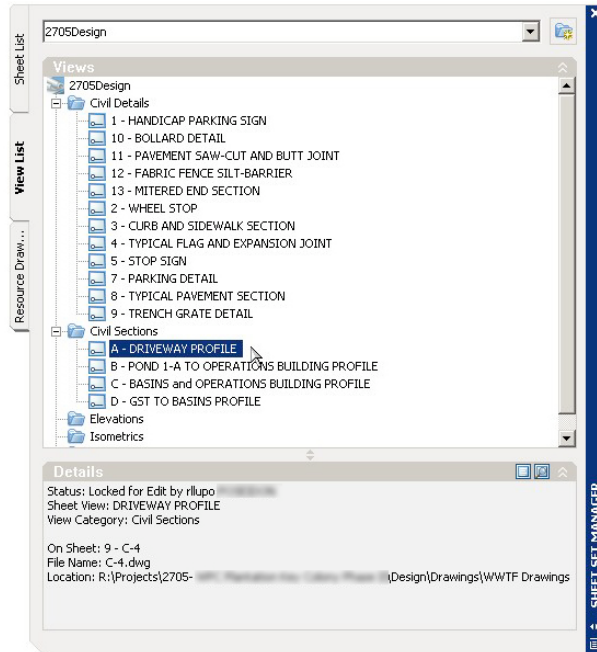
You can also add fields to attributes for global values. Instead of selecting a "CurrentSheet..." field name, select SheetSet, then select the Sheetset name, then the appropriate standard or custom property to place in your attribute. Now anytime these properties are edited, they will apply to all the drawings in your sheetset that have this title block inserted. This can be a huge time saver in large drawing sets.



Dynamic Detail Views & Callouts

Another feature is dynamically linking defined views such as drawing details to their callout location. This automates detail numbering and referencing between sheets. Begin by defining a view by zooming into your detail on a detail drawing. Simply type View, select the New button, then give the view a full name that should appear in the detail callout. Select the view category which you can define beforehand. The defined view(s) will now be available in the View list on the sheetset manager.

The defined views can now be "placed" in drawings to indicate where the detail is referenced. Using properly created callout blocks with field attributes, the detail or section number and sheet are automatically populated in the target block, and the detail or section description, number, and sheet number are automatically populated in the detail or section title block. If the details are ever renumbered or renamed in the View List of the sheetset manager, the detail or section targets and the title blocks are automatically updated. The detail or section marks can even be used as links while editing your drawing.



The detail or section targets can also be used to hyperlink directly to the corresponding detail drawing. The View list can also be used to navigate quickly to the drawing sheets that contain your details. Simply double-click the defined view in the View list and the drawing is opened and zoomed directly to the defined view.

The Drawing Index

The sheetset can also be used to create a drawing index. Open the sheet that will contain the drawing list. Then right click the sheetset name and select "Insert Sheet list Table". You can use the autocad default table style or create your own. Simply insert the table and all of the fields that you select to be included in the table are automatically populated into a table. The sheetlist table can now also be used to hyperlink directly to the drawings in your sheetset. The only drawback to the sheetlist table is that it does not automatically update to reflect changes in the titles or the addition or removal of sheets. The table can be manually updated by selecting the update option from the right click menu. It may be necessary to explode a long sheet list into multiple columns. However, if the sheet list table is exploded for some reason, it can no longer be automatically updated, at least in AutoCAD 2005. I am not aware if this has been addressed in newer versions of AutoCAD.

For more information on SheetSets in further detail, you can visit Heidi Hewett's blog at http://heidihewett.blogs.com/my_weblog/2005/10/the_first_step_.html.